CHAPTER 25

!

I'M GLAD YOU NOTICED.

WALKING UP AND KILLING YOU FROM BEHIND WOULDN'T BE VERY HONORABLE.

SAY WHAT.

YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?

BETSU TEN GAI DOESN'T HAVE THE SWORD OF DIVINE RETRIBUTION, KILL ME AND IT'S LOST.

AND I PLAN ON STEAL-ING THE SWORDS HANDLE FROM TEN GAI NEXT.

MAYBE WE SHOULD WORK TOGETHER ON THIS.

GET TO THE POINT ...

THE ONE BETSU TEN GAI HAS IS A FAKE.

I STILL HAVE THE REAL THING.

YOU'VE GOT NO OTHER CHOICE.

DO YOU ACTUALLY EXPECT ME TO GO ALONG WITH THIS?

EVEN IF YOU STAB ME, THAT WON'T SAVE MISS TAN HI.

YOU MEDDLING BASTARD, THAT'S DIFFERENT ...

EVEN YOU SHOULD KNOW THIS.

QUITE THE OPPOSITE IN FACT, I ONLY USED THEM IN ORDER TO GET US ACROSS THE DEMON SPINE MOUNTAINS.

I HEARD THAT THEY JOINED WITH YOU TO HELP STEAL THE SWORD OF DIVINE RETRIBUTION FROM TAN HI.

FROM WHAT YOU TOLD KEI GAI AND SHU UN SHO.

I HAVE MY OWN COMPLAINTS ABOUT THAT TOO.

EVERYONE'S A CHESS PIECE TO YOU.

I HAD NO IDEA YOU HAD MASTERED SUCH A "DREADFUL SWORD".

DON'T BE SILLY.

IF I HAD KNOWN YOU WERE A THIEF TRYING TO STEAL THE SWORD, I WOULDN'T HAVE COME.

YOU ARE QUITE THE MASTER IN DISGUISE.

IF I HAD KNOWN THIS BEFOREHAND I WOULDN'T HAVE INVITED THOSE TWO.

WHAT?

MY TARGET IS BETSU TEN GAI.

I'VE TOLD YOU BEFORE, I HAVE NO INTEREST IN THE SWORD OF DIVINE RETRIBUTION.

I SIMPLY WANT TO RUIN HIS DESPERATE SEARCH FOR THE ULTIMATE SWORD.

EVEN IF THAT MEANS STEALING IT IN THE PROCESS.

THAT'S REASON ENOUGH TO TAKE IT.

I'LL TELL YOU THIS MUCH, BETSU TEN GAI WANTS IT.

SO... YOU STILL WANT PART OF IT?

.....

OKAY, I'LL TRUST YOU.

IF YOU HANDO-VER THE GUARD.

HE'S HIDDEN IT WELL ENOUGH THOUGH.

I DON'T HAVE IT.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE LIMITLESS TEMPLE? I HID IT BACK THERE IN THE STONE PATH.

IT'S UP TO YOU IN THE END...

IF YOU WANT TO BELIEVE ME OR NOT.

AND BY THAT TIME YOU HAD ALREADY STOLEN IT FROM TAN HI...

WHAT DO YOU WANT MORE?

MY LIFE OR THE SWORD OF DIVINE RETRIBUTION,

!

BETSU TEN GAI SUMMONS YOU.

SIR RIN,

ドンドン

HUH?

SHO, GO TO TAN HI AND TELL HER WHAT'S GOING ON.

IT CAN'T BE HELPED.

OKAY!

WE'LL TALK AFTER I RETURN.

え

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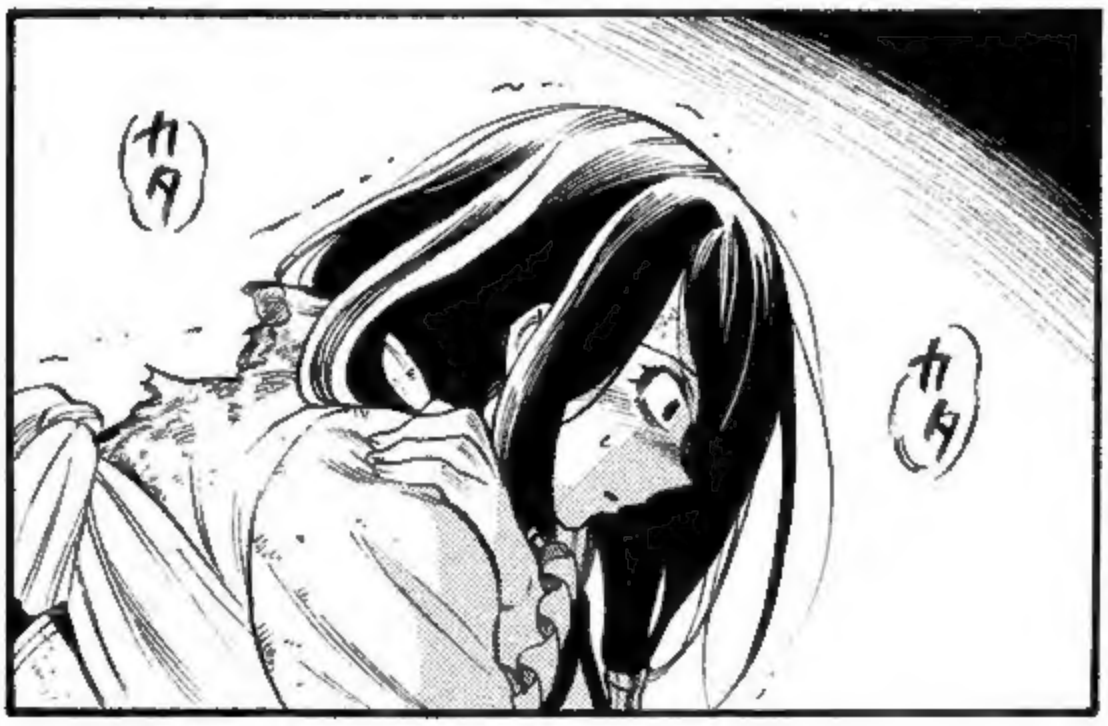
LEAVE IT ALL TO ME, DON'T WORRY.

ABOUT OUR PLAN TO STEAL THE SWORD, I'LL THINK ABOUT IT WHILE I'M AWAY.

.....YOU GODDAMN SLAVE DRIVER!!

DAMN IT.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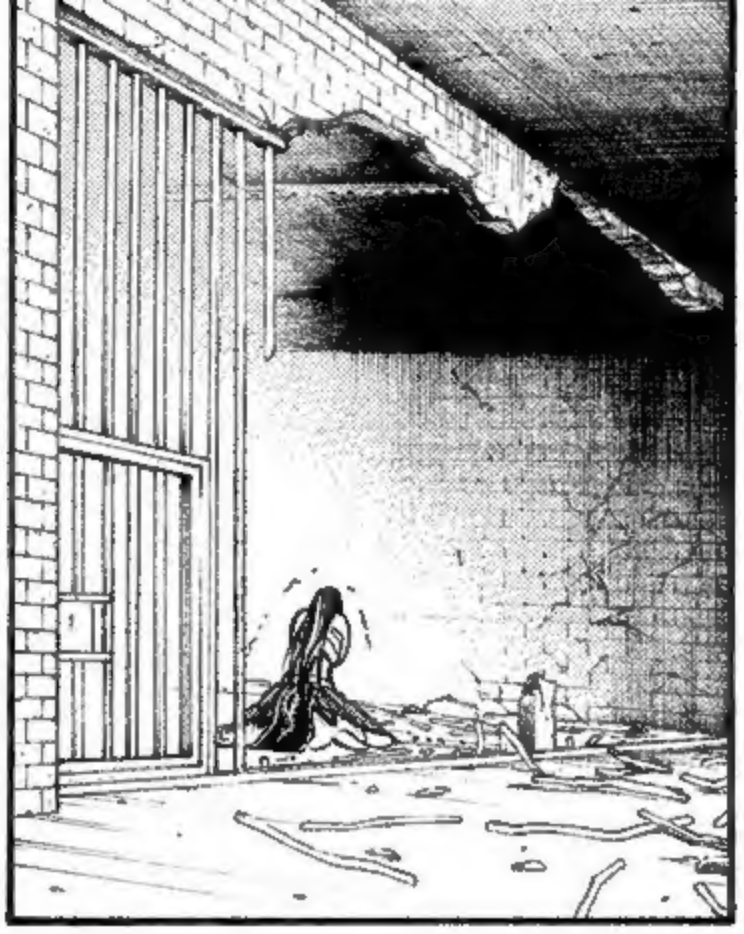

TAN
HI.

UH...

SIR
SHO...
WHAT
HAP-
PENED?

FIRST OF ALL, I GOT THIS.

!

AND THIS.

THIS TOO!

ALL THIS... HOW DID YOU...

IT'S BAD AND I'VE GOT LITTLE TIME TO EXPLAIN.

THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED.

SIR KICHO ...

WHAT A DREADFUL PERSON...

THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON BETWEEN THEM TWO...

RIN SAYS THAT HE WANTS TO STEAL THE HANDLE AND HELP GET THE SWORD BACK.

YES... BUT...

SO PLEASE ENDURE THIS PLACE UNTIL IT'S ALL OVER.

.....

NOW RIN IS GOING TO NEGOTIATE WITH BETSU TEN GAI.

...

OH, I SEE.

CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT TERRIBLE THINGS HAPPENED TO ME?

SIR SHO...

THAT KICHO...

I'LL JUST RUN MY BLADE RIGHT THROUGH HIM.

...IF WHAT HE'S TELLING US TURNS OUT TO BE ANOTHER LIE.

EH?!

NOW.

I HOPE YOU HAVE AN AMPLE REPLY, TEN GAI.

THIS WAY, PLEASE.

HOW SHALL WE HANDLE THIS PAYMENT?

ALRIGHT, SPLENDID.

FIVE THOUSAND JIN OF GOLD.

I WOULD LIKE TO THINK IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO CARRY ALL THE GOLD DOWN THE MOUNTAIN.

THAT'LL SEAL THE DEAL.

THE GOLD WILL NEED TO BE PREPARED ELSEWHERE, CARTS INCLUDED.

VERY WELL.

IT'LL TAKE A FULL DAY TO PREPARE SUCH A MASSIVE AMOUNT.

WHAT AN AWK-WARD AFFAIR.

IN THE MEANTIME I'LL ENJOY THIS CASTLES FINE WINE AND DINING.

HOW WILL YOU GIVE ME THE GUARD?

AS YOU WISH.

AFTERWARDS I'LL GUIDE YOU TO WHERE THE GUARD IS HIDDEN.

BOTH OF US WILL LEAVE THE MOUNTAIN TOGETHER, THEN I'LL CONFIRM THE PAYMENT.

I AM AWARE THAT MY REPUTATION IS THAT OF A THIEF.

HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT MEAN I'LL RUN AND HIDE AFTERWARDS.

WHAT GUARANTEE DO I HAVE THAT YOU WON'T RUN AWAY WITH THE MONEY?

CHEERS.

YOU ARE NOW THE PROUD NEW OWNER OF THE SWORD OF DIVINE RETRIBUTION.

WELL, THAT'S NOT TOTALLY UNREASONABLE.

I'LL START MAKING THE ARRANGEMENTS RIGHT AWAY.

I GUESS ALL WENT WELL.

WHAT NOW?

A DEAL HAS BEEN STRUCK.

WHILE HE'S GONE I'LL STEAL THE HANDLE.

THE EXCHANGE WILL TAKE PLACE OUTSIDE THE TOWER, HENCE WHY I INVITED TEN GAI.

...COME AGAIN?

MEAN-WHILE, I'LL BREAK INTO THE SAFE AND GET THE HANDLE.

SIMPLY PUT, YOU'LL GET THE GOLD FROM BETSU TEN GAI.

IT WON'T BE ENOUGH TO DECEIVE THE WISE.

THE THING ABOUT STRATEGY IS THAT UNLESS SOMEONE IS LAUGHING AND SAYS IT'S RIDICULOUS UPON HEARING IT,

WELL, I HAVE A FACE FOR YOU.

ゴソゴソ

?

JUST PUT IT ON.

THIS IS JUST SOME KIND OF HOOD.

CALM DOWN, IT WON'T KILL YOU.

WAH!? I CAN'T BREATHE ...

!?

TAKE A LOOK IN THE MIRROR.

I'M ALIVE ...

WHAT THE...!!

WITH THIS THERE ARE NOW TWO OF ME.

WHAT THE HELL!?

END OF CHAPTER 24